

REMARKS

Claims 1-7 are presently pending in the application. Claims 1-4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U. S. Patent No. 6,405,239 ("Addington") and U. S. Patent No. 5,623,666 ("Pike"). Claims 5-7 were objected as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Independent claim 1 was amended to include objected to dependent claim 5 and its intervening claim 4. Claims 4 and 5 were canceled. Objected to dependent claim 6 was amended to include independent claim 1. Additionally, new dependent claims 8-10 are included.

It is believed, therefore, that claims 1-3 and 6-10, as amended, are patentable over the cited art. Reconsideration and reexamination of the present application is requested in view of the foregoing amendment and in view of the remarks.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing is submitted as a full and complete response to the non-final Office Action dated December 13, 2006. Claims 1-3 and 6-10 will be pending in the present application upon entry of the present amendment, with claims 1 and 6 being independent. Based on the amendments and remarks set forth herein, Applicants respectfully submit that the subject patent application is in condition for allowance. Because the claims may include additional elements that are not taught or suggested by the cited art, the preceding arguments in favor of patentability are advanced without prejudice to other bases of patentability.

Upon entry of the foregoing Response, the above-identified patent application includes 2 independent claims and 3 new dependent claims. Because Applicants have paid herewith for 20 total claims and 3 independent claims, Applicants submit that no additional fee is due. Should it be determined that any additional fee is due or any excess fee has been received, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees which may be required or credit any overpayment to deposit account #19-0761.


Should the Examiner have any comments or suggestions that would place the subject patent application in better condition for allowance, he is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned agent at the below-listed number.

Respectfully submitted:

SEND CORRESPONDENCE TO:

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